

History of Council Churches

By Isabel Sibilio

The first meeting of church representatives to form an inter-church council was held Feb. 14, 1932. At the meeting were The Rev. Mrs. Allen Jacobs, The Rev. Percy Child, The Rev. F. Grant, Annie Williams, Mrs. L. Wyman, Mrs. Paul Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Redlon, Mrs. H. Holman and H. L. Tinker. Previously there had been Union Services on Memorial Day and Thanksgiving, 1928-31. One of the first projects discussed was a canvass of the town to list families of different church affiliations. This was handled by the Massachusetts Bible Society, who could not undertake the task. In the past few years

a similar project has been on the books, this time with local people doing the job. It is hoped that it will be accomplished soon. Also voted on in 1932 was that the collection at the Union Services be given to the Council.

In July of that year Mrs. Holway gave a dramatic reading of "The Wanderer" at the Unitarian Parish House and raised \$21 for the Council. The offering at the Thanksgiving Service was \$8.10 to compare with the \$53.60 in 1955.

On Nov. 11, 1936, The Rev. Mrs. Jacobs invited the Council and other members of the community to a New Year's Eve Service. The newly installed electric lights were to be used for the first time at that service.

The Council continued to hold Union Services, adding a Palm Sunday Evening Service in 1933-34. The Council was responsible

for the Baccalaureate Service for the High School from 1933-36. In 1936 the school took over the responsibility but in 1952 the Council was once more in charge with the service at the High School, three ministers and the priest from the Catholic Church participating.

Youth Rally

Each February, the Council held a Youth Rally. The attendance in 1937 was 100. The following year there was a bad snowstorm but a minister braved the storm coming from Providence, R. I. He received \$5 for his trouble. In 1942 an epidemic of mumps made attendance low.

There was a Community Christmas Tree in 1939 which was discontinued during the war. The Council sponsored a bus on Sundays during the gas rationing. Sunday vesper service on Captain's Hill during the summer were start-

ed in 1940. In 1942 the Council held movies during the summer and netted \$195.35. This was divided among the three churches, St. John's, Pilgrim and First Church.

The West Duxbury Methodist was asked to join the Council in 1949. The Rev. Walter Forred accepted but only one person came to meetings held a few times until 1953. There was some discussion of the Council sponsoring a newspaper in 1949. This was never acted upon because John Cutler launched the Duxbury Clipper in May of 1950.

The Christmas Eve Service showed its best in 1949, when 600 persons attended the service sponsored by the Council, the Roman Catholic Church, the Recreation Committee, and the Duxbury Public Schools. In 1953 a Community Christmas Tree held at DHS was

the result of work done by the Council, with gifts from many of the local clubs and organizations in Duxbury. In 1955 the Council joined with the PTA for the Christmas program.

The first World Day of Prayer Service in Duxbury was held in February, 1950, with Mrs. J. Anderson Lord as chairman. These services have continued each year with the women from the four churches participating.

The Council sponsored a Vacation Bible School in 1950 and two other years. The Council held a special service in September, 1952, in observance of the publishing of the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible.

United Fair

A United Church Fair was first suggested by Mrs. Richard Lewis in September, 1951, and became an actuality in December, 1952, at the Old Town Hall. This Fair has been held each year since, once more at the Old Town Hall and then in the auditorium of the Elementary School. The third year the West Duxbury Church joined the ranks of the Council in earnest and took a part in the Fair that year.

More Progress

In 1954 the first meeting of the ministers and Sunday School Superintendents was held to discuss the possibility of a film strip library and a joint meeting of all the Sunday School teachers. The first meeting of the Sunday School teachers was held in January, 1955, and was followed in January, 1956, by a second one. This time the topic for discussion was the use of film strips for in December, 1955, the Council, with the help of the churches, purchased over \$100 worth of film strips.

The by-laws were revised in June, 1955, as the need for more complete by-laws was felt by the Council which had grown and become so active.

Each year the Council donates to various worth-while activities. The first such project was sending an under-privileged child to camp in 1937. In 1940 the Council gave its first gift outside of Duxbury—to China Relief. In 1949 they gave their first regular contribution to the Massachusetts Council of Churches. In the past five years the Council has continued to give to the Massachusetts Council, the General Theological Library, and the Protestant Guild for the Blind. It also gave a generous gift towards the building of a chapel at the State Forestry Camp in South Carver.